

Hawaii Marine

9/11 remembrance travels from Big Apple to Mighty Mo'

Once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet Medal of Honor recipients

Congressional Medal of Honor Society
Press Release

HONOLULU — More than 50 Medal of Honor recipients will be on hand Oct. 6 for a book signing open to the public as part of the 2012 Medal of Honor Convention. Tickets for the event can be purchased online.

Recipients will meet and greet the public during two signing sessions: 9-11 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Hale Koa Hotel. This event is open exclusively for those who purchase tickets in advance. Only 500 tickets for each session will be sold. Tickets will not be sold at the door. Each ticket also includes a Medal of Honor quote book, which recipients can sign at the event.

The book signing is one of several public events taking place throughout Honolulu as part of the convention, which runs Oct. 1-6 and hosts 54 of the 81 living Medal of Honor recipients.

"It truly is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to come face-to-face and meet these extraordinary men who were willing to sacrifice their own lives to save others," said retired U.S. Navy Admiral and former Pacific Command Commander Thomas Fargo, co-chairman of the convention's host committee.

Each year, the Congressional Medal of Honor Society gathers to reunite living members, as they continue their legacy of inspiring our youth, honoring patriots and memorializing those recipients who have passed.

For more information or to join in honoring our nation's Medal of Honor recipients by volunteering, visit <http://www.MedalofHonorConvention2012.com> or see your senior enlisted advisor.



Cpl. James Sauter | Hawaii Marine

PEARL HARBOR — A hand-painted New York firefighting helmet sits on a podium during a ceremony at the Battleship Missouri Memorial commemorating the 11th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, Tuesday. The painting on one side depicts the destruction of the Dec. 7, 1941, attack while the other side shows the twin towers of the World Trade Center ablaze. The helmet was featured in a ceremony in New York City Tuesday morning and was flown across the nation to Pearl Harbor where Hawaii-based Marines, sailors and civilian guests gathered aboard the "Mighty Mo'" to conclude the cross-country remembrance ceremony. See CEREMONY on Pages A4-5 for more.

Asst SecNav MRA visits MCB Hawaii

Kristen Wong
Photojournalist

Marines, sailors and civilians of Marine Corps Base Hawaii attended a presentation by Juan Garcia, the assistant secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, at the base theater, Tuesday.

Garcia has recently visited various military installations, including Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, to spread the word to service members about upcoming policies and answer questions. In light of the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, he also wanted to extend his gratitude to the service members for "their work and service in what's been a demanding tempo over the last 11 years."

In addition, Garcia introduced the Marines and sailors to the 21st Century Sailor and Marine Initiative which is designed to help Marines and sailors with their health, safety and work efficiency. Through the program's website, Marines and sailors have easier access to many of the already-established programs such as tobacco cessation and motorcycle safety.

They will also be able to explore new initiatives in nutrition and alcohol. Soon, the Navy will be introducing breathalyzers into the workspaces "to ensure the health and safety of our sailors and units by identifying potential alcohol abuse," according to the 21st Century Sailor and Marine Initiative website. The Marine Corps will also be introducing breathalyzers.

"I'm glad that I attended the brief because it's always nice to hear information that affects military pay and personnel directly from the source," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Denis Lebreton, a personnel officer with the Installation Personnel Administration Center. "I was also glad to learn that (potential) sequestration will not affect the portion of the DOD budget that covers military pay and medical benefits. I'm sure my family, as well as other families, would be relieved to know this information."

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Levi Muniz, the command support branch officer in charge at IPAC was among many attending the presentation. Muniz said she was concerned about not having

See **SECRETARY, A-7**

NEW CIVILIAN POLICE OFFICER GRADUATES ON BEAT

Chief selects honor 9/11



Cpl. Vanessa American Horse | Hawaii Marine

The most recent graduating civilian police officers of the Marine Corps Civilian Police Academy pose for a photo in front of the base chapel after their graduation ceremony, Tuesday. Class 1-12 was recognized for completing a demanding 59 days of curriculum and training. (Back row) Brandon Malin, Tim Treacy, Michael Burkey, Chance Hardin, Richard Hughes, Freddy Williams and Daniel Montano. (Front row) Jerome Sablan, Travis Bouchonville, Jody Lee Smith, Kristopher Evers, Kyle Okada, Squire Osborne, Nathaniel Rabina and Vik Hak.



Kristen Wong | Hawaii Marine

Chief Petty Officer selectees from Navy Information Operations Detachment, Special Projects Patrol Squadron 2 and Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 37 unfurl the American flag and raise it on the flagpole during morning colors, Tuesday.



Touchdown!
HQB N Warriors
defeat CLB-3, B-1



Just horsing around!
Turtle Bay offers
horseback riding, C-1

Saturday
High 83
Low 74

Sunday
High 83
Low 74

NEWS BRIEFS

POW/MIA Recognition Day events

The commanding officer of Marine Corps Base Hawaii will host a POW/MIA ceremony on Sept. 21 at 8 a.m. during morning colors at the base flagpole. The event is open to all personnel and family members.

The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command will honor former prisoners of war and fallen U.S. personnel who remain missing in action during a ceremony commemorating National POW/MIA Recognition Day at 10 a.m., Sept. 21, at the “Punchbowl” National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

The ceremony is free and open to the public, and organizations are welcome to present wreaths or flowers, but wreaths must be delivered to Punchbowl no later than 9:15 a.m. on Sept. 21. Please contact Elizabeth Feeney at 448-1937 or visit JPAC’s website for more information.

Kaneohe Volunteer Opportunity

On Saturday, from 8 to 11:30 a.m., volunteers are needed for a graffiti paint-out and community clean-up at the Kaneohe District Park (skate park). It is suggested volunteers bring mosquito repellent, sun block, and a hat. Long pants and covered shoes are recommended. Refreshments will be provided.

For more information, call the Kaneohe Community Family Center, 235-7747.

FY 13 Intramural Marksmanship Matches

The MCB Hawaii FY 13 Intramural Matches will be held at the Puuloa Range Training Facility from Sept. 28 to Oct 12. Our MCB Hawaii MTU will provide a venue for supplemental training in fundamental marksmanship with service weapon systems.

It will consist of two weeks of classroom instruction, annual marksmanship training, and Marine Corps Competition-in-Arms Program-style, individual and team matches. Every Marine who participates will receive their annual rifle training qualifications for Table 1A and 2, and will also have the opportunity to qualify with the service pistol.

Send the senior competitor or team captain from your unit to Puuloa RTF on Sept. 19 at 10 a.m. to discuss the support requirements, timelines, and training schedule. For for more information about the intramural marksmanship matches, email brian.somers@usmc.mil or tommie.hudson@usmc.mil.

Flu vaccine exercise

A CNRH flu vaccine exercise will be held Sept. 18-20 from 7:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Branch Health Clinic. Naval Health Clinic Hawaii Clinic will experience limited services during the exercise. Includes BHCs Kaneohe, Makalapa, Camp Smith and Wahiawa. For more information, call 257-3365 x409.

U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific Band concert at Hale Koa Hotel

The United States Marine Forces, Pacific Band, under the direction of Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael J. Smith, is pleased to announce a live musical concert at the Hale Koa Hotel on Sept. 21.

The concert will be from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. at the Luau Garden located right inside the hotel. This event is free and open to the public with discounted parking after validation at the concert. For more information call the MarForPac Band hall at 257- 7440.

Important phone numbers

On-Base Emergencies	911
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCB Hawaii Chaplain	257-3552
DEERS	257-2077



Hawaii Marine

www.mcbh.usmc.mil

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Press Chief	Cpl. Reece Lodder
Combat Correspondent	Cpl. James A. Sauter
Photojournalist	Christine Cabalo
Photojournalist	Kristen Wong
Graphic Artist	Jay Parco
Contributing Writer	Grace Qiu

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MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii 96863
E-Mail: HawaiiMarineEditor@gmail.com
Fax: 257-2511, Phone: 257-8837

9/11: A day to remember often

Cpl. Reece Lodder
Combat Correspondent

Even 11 years later, the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks still has its way of sneaking up on me. I suppose it does for all of us.

I remember first hearing about them as I walked into middle school on a drab fall day. I could never forget — who can? We all have stories or personal ties to the attacks, just as we have unique ways of remembering and reflecting on the approximately 3,000 lives lost.

On Sept. 11, 2012, from our air-conditioned offices or behind a dusty, languishingly slow computer in Afghanistan, we briefly paused for a moment of silence. Wide-eyed, we viewed photos of 9/11’s aftermath and re-lived its hell online. Some whispered a prayer for those lost and their loved ones who remain. Others shook theirs heads, muttering words of disbelief at the more than a decade that has passed.

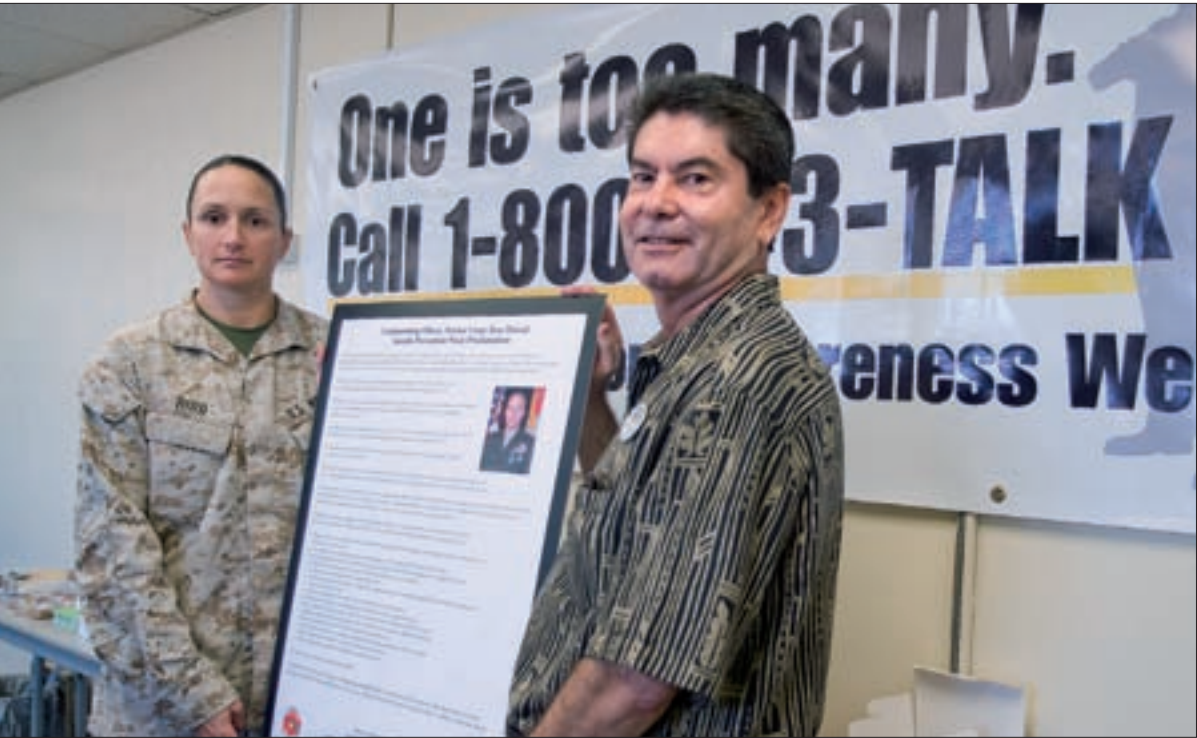
Our fellow Americans lost — men, women and children; spouses, parents and relatives; employees and bosses; young and old — were torn from their families

and friends by evil. Their lives were snuffed out; exponentially, thousands more were forever changed.

Soon after tragedy rocked our nation, America went to war. Thousands of men and women knowingly volunteered to serve their country and protect their fellow Marines, sailors, soldiers and airmen overseas. In these battles, we’ve lost 6,600 of our own. Though we already honor them on other days, we must not forget them on this heartbreaking anniversary. Likewise, it is our duty to remember our country’s prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action during National POW/MIA Recognition Day, Sept. 21.

Frequent or otherwise, our solemn thanks and remembrance are never enough to honor their sacrifice. We enjoy freedom only because the men and women who have gone before us have paid its cost in blood.

The anniversary of 9/11 has passed. Time ticks on and we continue with the busyness of duties and personal lives. In the not-so-distant future, we’ll incredulously remember this day again. Until then, we must often remember those who gave, and those who sacrificed so we could live.



Christine Cabalo | Hawaii Marine

Lt. Col. Carolyn D. Bird, commanding officer, Headquarters Battalion, presents an official proclamation to Rick De Leon, base behavioral health programs manager at the Marine and Family Programs office, Monday. Bird presented the proclamation on behalf of Col. Brian P. Annichiarico, commanding officer, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, recognizing Suicide Prevention and Awareness Week.

DOD: Recognize signs of suicide

Karen Parrish
American Forces Press Service

September, National Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month, is a reminder to everyone in the military community to watch out for each other, a senior defense official said.

Jacqueline Garrick, acting director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office, told the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service the Defense Department’s theme for the month’s observance, “Stand By Them,” is a prompt to get involved when a friend or loved one seems distressed.

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, she noted, has been adamant about encouraging people to seek help, and in stressing leaders’ responsibility to ensure their people get the counseling they need.

“I think the first key factor is to understand the signs and symptoms of suicide, and not to be afraid to ask the question,” she said. “It’s a myth that if you ask

somebody, ‘Are you feeling suicidal?’ that you’ll put a thought in their head. And that’s just not going to happen. If somebody’s really in distress, ... the first thing we want people to know to do is ask the questions, ‘Do you feel like you could hurt yourself,’ ‘Do you have a plan?,’ and ‘How can I help?’”

Garrick said relationship issues, legal or financial problems often are factors in the lives of people at risk for suicide. Anyone suspecting possible suicidal impulses in a friend, co-worker or loved one also should be sensitive to changes in moods or behavior patterns, she added.

Excessive risk-taking, substance abuse, giving away possessions and changes in life insurance arrangements are all possible indicators someone may be considering suicide, she said. Garrick said she encourages military family members concerned about a loved one’s state of mind to contact commands, chaplains’ offices, community services, or any other means of help they can reach.

“One of the key features that we’re working on right now is with the Department of Veterans Affairs,” she said. “For several years, they have been working on the Veteran’s Crisis Line, and we have been working with them to rebrand [it] as the Military Crisis Line so that our men and women in uniform know that the Military Crisis Line, the ‘1-800-273-TALK (8255) number, press 1 if you’re military,’ is for them, too.”

The Military Crisis Line is an overarching and confidential resource — “one number to call when you’re experiencing any kind of crisis, any kind of suicidal ideation, any thoughts, feelings ... that you’re not sure how to deal with,” Garrick said.

The crisis line also has an on-line chat option at <http://www.militarycrisisline.net>, and a text component reachable by smartphone at 838255, she explained. Marines, sailors and family members can also call DStress 24/7 at 1-877-476-7734 or visit <http://www.DStressLine.com>.

Take time for Constitution Day Sept. 17

Command Master Sgt. Scott Hubbartt
U.S. Air Force, Retired

In a couple of days it will be Constitution Day. That’s right — Monday, Sept. 17, is the big day. However, before you stock up on burgers and charcoal for the grill you might want to read on. First, don’t expect to see marching bands, baton twirlers, or to enjoy a federally mandated “day off.” It’s more important than that.

Formally established in 2004 and also appropriately referred to as Citizenship Day, it is a day set aside to recognize and learn about our most important document. On that day 225 years ago in 1787, our birth certificate as a nation was signed by some very brave and bold people who formed the Constitutional Convention.

The day, as a holiday, was first recognized as “Constitution Day” in 1911 by Iowa schools but did not become the law of the land until 2004 when the date was established as a holiday by Congress’ 2004 Omnibus spending bill.

Over time, many cities and states established various celebrations, recognitions and proclamations to recognize the most important political document ever established. But still, no nationwide form of federal, formal recognition existed.

In 1939, William Randolph Hearst pushed the holiday through his newspaper empire and the next year Congress established the third Sunday in May as “I

am an American Day.” This perpetuated a movement which spread to all 48 states with their governors issuing official “Constitution Day” proclamations. In February 1952, Congress established Sept. 17 as “Citizenship Day.”

Then, along came the 2004 passage of an amendment by Sen. Robert Byrd formally renaming the holiday “Constitution Day and Citizenship Day.” Further, the act directed that on that day all publicly funded educational institutions provide educational programming on the history of the American Constitution.

So what is this all about? After all, it is only a 225-year-old piece of parchment, the oldest national constitution in continuous use, written by some 16th century radicals, dressed in funny clothes and now locked away in some vault. Right? WRONG!

In response, my best advice to you is to ask you to read this cherished and vital document. Really read and study it. Ponder its meaning. Ask yourself, how does this “most important of political documents” apply to me?

Too many of us take this most important political document for granted. Actually it is a brilliantly written document and, some would argue, divinely inspired. The best advice I can give you is to read and study it.

Appreciate and honor it not only on Monday, Sept. 17, but every day as you enjoy the freedoms, privileges and responsibilities it spells out, and be thankful you live in the greatest nation in the history of mankind.

AROUND *THE* CORPS

Marine survives combat wounds, thrives with wife

Sgt. Heather Golden

Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.

When you've practically lost yourself to a wartime attack, been set on fire, clawed yourself free of wreckage without all your limbs intact, your face, arms, legs, even your eyelids are burned away, and you have no idea how you lived through all this, you can't just come home. This is retired Cpl. Anthony Villarreal's life after a hidden pressure plate in Helmand province, Afghanistan, blew apart his vehicle June 20, 2008, with him still inside it. At the time, Anthony was deployed with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

Normalcy doesn't mean what it once did. But luckily for Villarreal, normalcy still means coming

while she visited Anthony so he could hear her voice.

The detachment Marines tracked Jessica down at the hospital within hours, and gave her a folder full of information about the base and hospital. Their office was soon her safe haven.

"The Marine detachment was always there if I ever needed anybody to talk to. I went to their offices whenever it was not visiting hours."

Jessica said she took these months one day at a time.

"I did not even think about future events I couldn't control," she said. "The hardest part was having to sign for the amputation of his left fingers and right hand. The doctors gave me time to think about it. I asked many questions and prayed I would make the

sheets for tests.

One year ago:

With therapy and surgeries out of the way, Jessica and Anthony started focusing on normal, everyday worries, like housing and finances. Neither situation was good. The pair considered moving in with one of their parents.

All that changed when they were invited to a luncheon held by Operation Finally Home, a program that provides mortgage-free homes to wounded veterans. They thought they were going just to learn about the program and meet organizers. They had no idea they had already been chosen as the first Lubbock recipients of a new, fully-furnished home.

The organization, in partnership with the Texas Home Builders Association and various donors, started on a 3-bedroom, 2.5-bath home with customizations that allowed Anthony to open doors and get around unassisted.

"I met with designers and decorators and furniture folks," Jessica said. "I had never picked out furniture before, dishes, vanity appliances, or color schemes."

The home meant more to the couple than simply having a house. For them, it meant independence and security. For Anthony, it meant being a "regular, responsible adult."

They were the first to move in on their street. Since then, the neighborhood has grown.

"It's normal, I suppose," Jessica said. "Friends come over often. We invite them to swim, and we make dinner. We all pitch in. It's a good time."

Present day:

Jessica and Anthony are still students. This year is the first semester Anthony has a schedule that doesn't include Jessica as a classmate.

"This is a big deal for him because he has been taking care of himself while he is at school. We got him an iPad to write notes on, a tape recorder, anything and everything we could to make his note taking easier."

They also work with the Wounded Warrior Project, and Anthony is on the board for the West Texas Home Builders Association. He acts as something like a veteran representative.

He's also learned how to be himself again.

"Anthony can do many things on his own," Jessica said. "He can drive. I recently taught him how to drive standard. With every obstacle, somehow we have come up with how to adapt and overcome any little thing to help him be independent."

One of those obstacles the pair still faces together is reactions to his appearance.

"At the beginning, I think it broke his heart a little when children did hide," Jessica said. "This was the stage when he was still getting used to his new reflection."

"I used to be very protective of him. Now I just smile. People are curious. Some ask, some do not. Anthony has a natural way of decreasing awkwardness. He is a natural with the kiddos. He would lean down and say hello, make that kid smile."

Jessica said there are no more plans for any future surgeries, although they have had plenty of options for nose reconstruction. Anthony said he did not want to risk any further complications. Jessica said she does not feel he needs to change.

"Anthony looks handsome the way he is."

Life has calmed down considerably since the attack. They live a quiet life, spending time with each other, their friends, and their three dogs, April, Chewy and Mongo. It is a change the Villarreals welcome.

"Life's definitely slowed down," Jessica said. "I believe we have settled wonderfully. Our unique and blessed situation is about as normal as it is going to get."

The day of the attack changed both their lives, and almost cost them each other.

But in the end, it didn't.

And for Jessica that is the very best part of their story.



Lance Cpl. DJ Wu | Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California

Retired Cpl. Anthony Villarreal and his wife, Jessica, share a kiss during a recent visit back to Twentynine Palms.

home to a loving wife, one who stayed despite the trials she knew they'd face.

It's been four years since the attack that almost cost him his life. This is his story as told by her.

Jessica was with her father in San Antonio when she got the call that changed her life, the one telling her Anthony was injured and on his way home.

Military officials reached Jessica's mother first, and passed on a number for her to call. Her mother insisted on talking to her father instead, which is when Jessica knew something was wrong.

"My mother couldn't even talk to me," Jessica said. "As I followed him toward the living area, I was trying to eavesdrop. All I heard was, '...got burned...' My first thought was my sister's kids burned themselves with the iron or the oven. My dad buzzed me away with his hand, so I went back to my room to finish folding my clothes. Soon after, my dad walks in my room and said, 'Anthony is hurt. He was burned. Your mother gave me this number. You need to call it immediately.'"

The number connected Jessica to someone in Quantico, Va.

"I stated my name, told her Anthony Villarreal is my husband, and will you please tell me what is going on," Jessica said.

The woman on the other end of the line told Jessica that Anthony had been injured two days prior, but she did not know how badly. She asked Jessica to call back in a few hours, and she could tell her exactly where he was being transferred.

Anthony was scheduled to arrive at the Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, further up the street where Jessica was staying. Her father drove her to the base that same day.

The nurses walked Jessica through to the area where Anthony would be. Jessica said she walked that route repeatedly so it would become instinctual.

"Once he was there, I knew my mind would go blank. I wanted to memorize the place."

Four years ago: Midnight, June 23, 2008:

A little more than a day and a half later, Jessica was taken to Anthony's room.

The doctors guided her in, and first needed her to ID him as her husband. He was completely wrapped in dressings, still in a medically-induced coma. He stayed in this coma for three months.

"The first two things I saw were his eyes and lips. And I said, 'Yeah, that's him.' That's all I could see. He looked like a mummy.

"The room felt like a sauna. His dressings needed to be moist at all times. I had to wear a full germ-blocking apron, hair net, mask, gloves and shoe booties to prevent any outside germs. Anthony was exposed, as they put it."

Although Anthony was still in a coma during these early months, Jessica wasn't alone. The hospital staff, a base chaplain and the Marines attached to the unit all added themselves to Jessica's support system. The nurses made sure Jessica was just as well taken care of as if she was a patient herself.

"They instinctively took me under their wing and even went so far as telling me to go eat."

The chaplain, Chaplain Vandress, gave Jessica a book to help her cope. Jessica started reading it aloud

correct decision."

Jessica was at the hospital every day, 30 minutes prior to visiting hours at 6 a.m.

She started learning how to take care of Anthony while he slowly learned how to walk again.

"I saw the nurses apply the bandages quite often. The nurses had to undo his dressing, bathe him, which involved painful scrubbing, and then reapply his dressings. Sometimes the bandages would come loose, and in the attempt to fix it properly, I started asking questions. The nurses taught me how. After that, I wouldn't let anybody else do it."

The practice turned out to be helpful even after Anthony's stay at the hospital was over.

"It did not dawn on me that Anthony would need it after he got out," she said. "Anthony needed to have clean bandages every day. So we had to get up early and take care of him. I was going to protect him."

Jessica said this ordeal has built their marriage up to and beyond where they had imagined.

"We know now how to take care of each other," she said. "You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have. My choice was simple. I was not going to give up."

The pair soon discovered their marriage, and Jessica's determination to push through everything, was a minority attitude. Other wives were not handling the recovery process as well.

"With that kind of pressure, it does not take long for someone to show their true colors," Jessica said. "I was acquainted with a wife who took a completely different path. Just being around her for a small amount of time was so negative. She was set on leaving. You are who you surround yourself with, and I was not going to let myself get dragged down."

Anthony heard the same stories during group therapy sessions. He started to worry, but not for long.

"Doubt crossed his mind about if this could happen to him," she said. "I assured him that I loved him, and that I wasn't going to leave. It never crossed my mind."

Anthony was released from in-patient care in October 2008, just a few months after the attack. The doctors and nurses joked, saying, "Marines heal faster." His therapy lasted another two years after that.

In December 2008, after more than 70 surgeries, Anthony was well enough to travel back to California for his unit's return from Afghanistan and for their memorial ceremony.

Three years ago:

Jessica started going back to school when Anthony's medical appointments slowed to every other day. She scheduled classes for days when Anthony didn't have therapy, and she only scheduled a few at a time.

"I was worried to leave him at home, and have a meal pass by."

Going to school gave Jessica an idea, one to help Anthony build his confidence and independence.

"It took some work to get Anthony in school again. I made him go with me to schedule my classes at South Plains College. My counselor convinced him to take a couple classes; one with me, one without me at similar times, so we could be close by."

Thanks to the school's disabled program, volunteers were available to help him fill in his Scantron answer



Courtesy of Jessica Villarreal

Retired Cpl. Anthony Villarreal holds a puppy he befriended in Afghanistan. His wife,, Jessica, said he has always had a soft spot for dogs.

11 years later: Ceremony commemorates fallen heroes of 9/11, Pearl Harbor

Story and photos by
Cpl. James A. Sauter
Combat Correspondent

PEARL HARBOR — As the sun set over Pearl Harbor, a drizzle of rain, coupled with the evening light, formed a rainbow between USS Bowfin and the Battleship Missouri Memorial. Guests gathered underneath a white tent on the Missouri's stern and socialized over glasses of wine as they listened to live, soft jazz music before being called to their seats. The ceremony started in New York City, Tuesday morning, to honor the people who died on 9/11, and then the guests flew to Hawaii to finish it at Pearl Harbor, to honor the lives lost on Dec. 7, 1941.

Service members, Gear Up Foundation members and other guests commemorated the heroic men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice on both days during a ceremony hosted by the foundation aboard the Missouri, Tuesday.

Gear Up was envisioned three days after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as an organization to help raise money, donate equipment and provide training for firefighters in other countries that don't have a means to provide it themselves. To honor the fallen on both dates, the ceremony at the Missouri was the conclusion of two ceremonies that started that morning in New York City. Vinnie Forras, founder of Gear Up, a former volunteer firefighter and a first responder, clearly remembers the morning of Sept. 11 and the horrors he experienced at the epicenter that led him to create the foundation.

"Gear Up pays tribute to all those who perished on 9/11 through our charity actions around the world," Forras said. "We're trying to bring the world together instead of being ripped apart like the terrorists want. This ceremony is a way of remembering those who died and those who continue to die."

Forras remembers getting a radio message stating a major catastrophe happened. What stood out most to Forras at the time were the firefighters coming from Ground Zero covered in white dust.



Daniel Rodriguez, the "Singing Policeman," prays during a ceremony at the Battleship Missouri Memorial commemorating the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Tuesday.

Forras greeted one of the firemen and he remembers hearing him say, "they're all gone ... they're all gone."

"I couldn't really fathom what that really meant until I was deployed to Ground Zero," Forras said. "The sights and the sounds were overwhelming. The dust cloud made it impossible to see the site and all I could hear was the chirping of the locators firemen use to find one another. They were squashed underneath the rubble and there was nothing we could do about it."

Days later while working to recover survivors and clear the rubble, Forras remembered Ground Zero to be deathly silent. In the middle of the night, he saw a hole that wasn't searched before. Forras moved inside the hole and it collapsed on him. In a panic, Forras prayed because he thought he was going to die.

"He actually came that moment," Forras said. "He gave me the vision of holding my three sons. All my fear was gone and I promised to God that I would dedicate my life to serving him. That's how Gear Up was started."

The ceremony began with opening remarks and performances by singers Daniel Rodriguez and Tomaczek Bednarek.

Rodriguez is famously known as the "Singing Policeman" and for his work as a singer for the New York Police Department, performing "God Bless America" during 9/11 memorial services.

Bednarek is an accomplished entertainer who has worked with music legends such as Ray Charles and Michael Jackson. During Bednarek's performance of the song "Our Heroes," Marines and sailors from the audience sang along with him.

"A lot of us new guys in the Marine Corps were young when 9/11 happened," said Sgt. William Bauman, pianist, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific Band. "Thinking back and seeing how America has changed, it shows significance how everyone can come together and remember what happened today."

The ceremony concluded with a presentation of American tribute flags that has every name of those who died imprinted on them. Roll-call of everyone who died on 9/11 was called followed by a bugler playing taps.

"Let us unite as people to try to make our best effort to understand each other so well that events like Pearl Harbor and 9/11 will only be horrible memories of the past," Forras said. "Let God protect you and any service you do for this nation. I thank you so much for joining us here tonight."



Singer Tomaczek Bednarek sings "Our Heroes" during a ceremony aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial commemorating the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Tuesday.



Singer Tomaczek Bednarek sings "Our Heroes" with the help of Marines and sailors during a ceremony at the Battleship Missouri Memorial commemorating the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Tuesday.



Gear Up Foundation members, service members and other guests take their seats before a ceremony begins commemorating the people who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001, and Dec. 7, 1941 aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial, Tuesday. Gear Up was envisioned three days after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as an organization to help raise money, donate equipment and provide training for firefighters in other countries that don't have a means to providing it themselves.



Tomaczek Bednarek, Master Sgt. Andy Anderson and Vinnie Forras listen to the opening remarks of a ceremony at the Battleship Missouri Memorial on the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Tuesday.

Serving birthday wishes

Kristen Wong
Photojournalist

Anderson Hall Dining Facility is wishing service members a “happy birthday” by offering a special meal.

For the standard meal rate, service members celebrating their birthday can enjoy a special meal on a designated day of the month.

This month, the birthday menu items included roasted prime rib, baked lobster, garlic mashed potatoes, rice pilaf, corn on the cob, steamed broccoli dinner rolls, and au jus sauce. Upcoming meals will be the same each month, though the special promotion is a work in progress.

“We’re in the testing phase,” said Gunnery Sgt. Nelson Shippee, assistant manager, Anderson Hall Dining Facility. “It’s a program that we can definitely build on.”

Shippee said the hope is that the special promotion will attract more patrons to eat at Anderson Hall. He said Anderson Hall leadership garnered inspiration by Marine Corps bases in Okinawa, which offer this promotion.

The staff will send a basewide email announcing the date and times for each month. Service members must present an identification card showing their birth date to the cashier. A decorated seating area is available. Though friends are welcome to sit in the area, they are not eligible for the birthday meal.

Master Sgt. Luis Arambula, manager, Anderson Hall, said promotions like these are a way to show service members who eat there how much the staff cares. He said the staff wants to know what other accommodations Anderson Hall can make for its patrons.

Pfc. John Melanson, a cannoneer with Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, was among the first patrons to enjoy a special birthday meal, Sept. 7. Melanson, of Brooksville, Fla., turns 20 years old on Saturday.

“Steak and lobster are pretty good choices,” Melanson said.

He said he eats at Anderson Hall almost daily to save money, and said it the promotion is a thoughtful gesture.

Lance Cpl. John Geis, a Chinese linguist with 3rd Radio Battalion, enjoyed steak for his birthday meal.



Kristen Wong | Hawaii Marine

Pfc. John Melanson (left), a cannoneer with Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, enjoys a special birthday lunch at Anderson Hall Dining Facility, Friday, with friends, Pfc. Brandon Wheeler (center), a cannoneer with Alpha Battery, 1st Bn., 12th Marines, and Pfc. Andrew Strickland (right), a surveyor with Headquarters Battery, 1st Bn., 12th Marines.

Geis, of Snohomish, Wash., makes an effort to eat at Anderson Hall for lunch and dinner to save money. Geis, who turns 24 on Sept. 19, said the idea of having a special birthday meal was “cool.”

“It was actually a surprise,” said 26-year-old Cpl. Dave Medicus, the police sergeant for Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, of Youngstown, Ohio. “I’m glad I was able to come to the chow hall today.”

Shippee said patrons can also expect other changes at Anderson Hall. Staff will be revising its master menu in the beginning of October.

He encouraged patrons to send comments via the Interactive Customer Evaluation system on the base website.

“We would like feedback,” Shippee said. “We definitely appreciate [patrons’] continued support.”

Bon appetit:1/3 Marine chef carves out first-place win

Christine Cabalo
Photojournalist

Cpl. William Johns is savoring the taste of victory after he won first place at the Chef of the Quarter cooking contest at Anderson Hall Dining Facility held Wednesday.

His menu, entitled “A Taste of Europe,” featured dishes showcasing his culinary skills preparing French cuisine.

He was among three Anderson Hall chefs selected to craft a menu of original recipes and present their dishes to a three-judge panel and a lunchtime crowd.

“I really tried to go the extra length for the competition,” said Johns a food service specialist with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. “I tried to shoot for the right size of individual portions and prepare bright colorful food with good flavors.”

The winning menu featured both French and rustic Italian dishes, including a traditional French onion soup, an appetizer of Belgian endive and apple salad with cranberry vinaigrette, parmesan-roasted asparagus, and chicken roulade with mushroom duxelle. Johns prepared a creamy panna cotta with fresh berries, drizzled with a sweet balsamic reduction for dessert.

“The panna cotta dessert is what I put the most love into today,” he said. “There’s fresh fruit paired with the sweetness of the honey in it. I also thought the berries nicely complimented the sweet balsamic reduction in the dessert.”

The judging panel for this latest Chef of the Quarter contest featured chefs with civilian and military kitchen experience. Among them was chef Martin Johnson, a



Christine Cabalo | Hawaii Marine

Cpl. William Johns, food service specialist, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, prepares to serve his appetizer for the Chef of the Quarter contest held Wednesday.

corporate chef from JTM Food Group. With only a minor critique for John’s timing to cook asparagus, Johnson praised the winning chef’s overall skills and presentation.

“I noticed all of his preparation,” Johnson said. “He was calm and kept up the cleanliness of his kitchen. His

mise en place, or preparation before cooking, was excellent. Compared to the other chefs, he had better organization and control of his area.”

Johns’ competitors, Sgt. JaLisa Joseph of Headquarters Battalion and Lance Cpl. Nhia Xiong of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, impressed the judges in other ways. Joseph, who came in second place, prepared technically difficult spinach stuffed pork tenderloin with fluffy parmesan couscous.

“I wanted my couscous to have different ingredients inside of it,” she said. “I wanted lots of color, so it wouldn’t be a dull beige but vibrant with orange carrots and other vegetables.”

For chef Ernesto Limcaco, Xiong’s detailed list of ingredients, fishbowl menu and Asian table decoration impressed him during judging.

Xiong, the previous Chef of the Quarter winner, gained points with Limcaco for his thorough meal planning notes.

“One of the main elements I look for is accuracy in the packets they presented to us,” Limcaco said. “For the recipes they submit, they need to work in a military mess hall situation. We need to be able to replicate it and have it look the same in another kitchen.”

Although all the chefs impressed, it was Johns with the highest score who won the first place tiki trophy, an exclusive apprenticeship and a new 10-inch chef knife. The 1/3 chef said he was glad the contest could bring more attention to his hard-working colleagues.

“I’m happy we all did really well,” Johns said. “My fellow competitors cooked just as hard, and only a few points separated us.”

SECRETARY, from A-1

retirement benefits.

“I was actually relieved to hear that whoever is wearing the uniform right now will be grandfathered in,” Muniz said. “Especially (since) I have a little one ... (I need) to be able to provide for her once I retire.”

She mentioned there was new information about the Career Intermission Pilot Program. This four-year program, according to Navy Personnel Command, started in 2009 and continuing through this year, allows service members to leave

active duty on a temporary basis, becoming part of the Individual Ready Reserve without losing healthcare coverage. Only 20 officers and 20 enlisted service members are eligible each year. Muniz said she appreciated the CIPP, which can benefit families with dual-active duty parents.

“It’s a hard decision between what I love doing and my family,” Muniz said. “(CIPP will make it) easier.”

Garcia had more reassuring news for each of the branches. All services can expect a 1.7 percent increase in pay in 2013, according to “The Budget for Fiscal Year 2013,”

on the White House website. For the Marines, he said a “drawdown will be executed without breaking faith,” reassuring them of the eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan. There are also changes planned for working-age retirees with regard to healthcare through the Affordable Care Act. With regard to the Navy, Garcia told the sailors that there aren’t currently any plans for future enlisted retention boards, a process which could potentially cut qualified sailors to adjust a manpower quota.

For Lt. Cmdr. Chad Norris, the operations officer for Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 51, much of the information was not new to him, but was extra confirmation.

“He verified 100 percent of (Navy) individual augmentees for the war are going to be transitioning to the Navy

reserve,” Norris said.

Norris said this would be beneficial because the opportunity for employment has increased for these Navy IAs.

Garcia also shared what were perhaps inspirational stories with the audience, including one from 2010 about a German vessel called the Magellan Star. The Magellan Star was taken over by pirates and the German sailors had welded themselves into the engineering room and were sending out a satellite signal for help.

When American service members overpowered the pirates and took back the vessel, they had a difficult time convincing the German sailors that they could emerge from their hiding place. Garcia said the German sailors only needed to see a single American flag

patch slid through a hole to convince them they were safe.

Another story was about an Iranian ship hijacked by pirates earlier this year. The USS Kidd used a 20-year-old sailor who could speak Urdu, enabling the fishermen to tell the sailor all they needed to know without fear of the Somali pirates, who didn’t understand the language. Garcia said this helped the U.S. sailors take the vessel back from the pirates, and when they left, the Iranian fishermen were smiling and waving goodbye despite having been taught all their lives negative sentiments about Americans.

“A 20-year-old sailor changed the course of events,” Garcia pointed out.

For more information about the 21st Century Sailor and Marine Initiative, visit <http://www.21stcentury.navy.mil>.



Photos by Kristen Wong | Hawaii Marine

LEFT: Juan Garcia, the assistant secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs speaks to Marines and sailors at the base theater, Tuesday. Garcia informed the audience about new initiatives and addressed specific concerns. **RIGHT:** Juan Garcia, (fourth from left) the assistant secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs chats with attendees at the base theater, Tuesday.